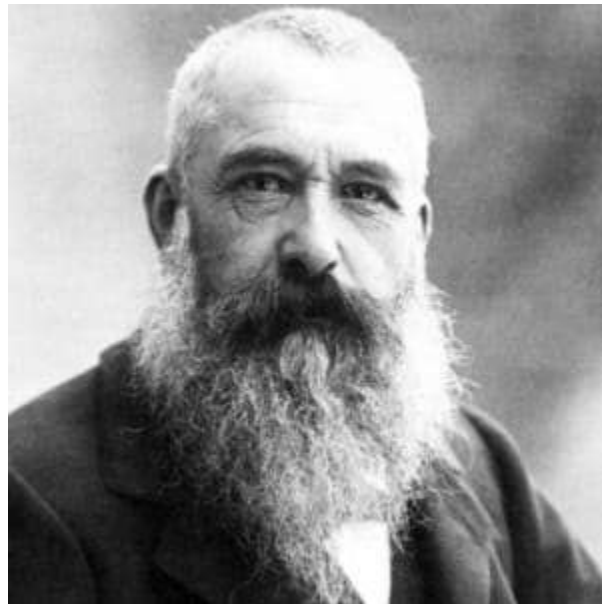


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Claude Monet was a famous French painter whose work gave a name to the art movement Impressionism, which was concerned with capturing light and natural forms.

Who Was Claude Monet?

Claude Monet was born in 1840 in France and enrolled in the Academie Suisse. After an art exhibition in 1874, a critic insultingly dubbed Monet's painting style "Impression," since it was more concerned with form and light than realism, and the term stuck. Monet struggled with depression, poverty and illness throughout his life. He died in 1926.

Early Life and Career

One of the most famous painters in the history of art and a leading figure in the Impressionist movement, whose works can be seen in museums around the world, Oscar Claude Monet (some sources say Claude Oscar) was born on November 14, 1840, in Paris, France. Monet's father, Adolphe, worked in his family's shipping business, while his mother, Louise, took care of the family. A trained singer, Louise liked poetry and was a popular hostess.

In 1845, at the age of 5, Monet moved with his family to Le Havre, a port town in the Normandy region. He grew up there with his older brother, Leon. While he was reportedly a decent student, Monet did not like being confined to a classroom. He was more interested in being outside. At an early age, Monet developed a love of drawing. He filled his schoolbooks with sketches of people, including caricatures of his teachers. While his mother supported his artistic efforts, Monet's father wanted him to go into business. Monet suffered greatly after the death of his mother in 1857.

In the community, Monet became well-known for his caricatures and for drawing many of the town's residents. After meeting Eugene Boudin, a local landscape artist, Monet started to explore the natural world in his work. Boudin introduced him to painting outdoors, or plein air painting, which would later become the cornerstone of Monet's work.

In 1859, Monet decided to move to Paris to pursue his art. There, he was strongly influenced by the paintings of the Barbizon school and enrolled as a student at the Academie Suisse. During this time, Monet met fellow artist Camille Pissarro, who would become a close friend for many years.

From 1861 to 1862, Monet served in the military and was stationed in Algiers, Algeria, but he was discharged for health reasons. Returning to Paris, Monet studied with Charles Gleyre. Through Gleyre, Monet met several other artists, including Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley and Frederic Bazille; the four of them became friends. He also received advice and support from Johann Barthold Jongkind, a landscape painter who proved to be an important influence to the young artist.

Monet liked to work outdoors and was sometimes accompanied by Renoir, Sisley and Bazille on these painting sojourns. Monet won acceptance to the Salon of 1865, an annual juried art show in Paris; the show chose two of his paintings, which were marine landscapes. Though Monet's works received some critical praise, he still struggled financially.

The following year, Monet was selected again to participate in the Salon. This time, the show officials chose a landscape and a portrait Camille (or also called Woman in Green), which featured his lover and future wife, Camille Doncieux. Doncieux came from a humble background and was substantially younger than Monet. She served as a muse for him, sitting for numerous paintings during her lifetime. The couple experienced great hardship around the birth of their first son, Jean, in 1867. Monet was in dire financial straits, and his father was unwilling to help them. Monet became so despondent over the situation that, in 1868, he attempted suicide by trying to drown himself in the Seine River.

Fortunately, Monet and Camille soon caught a break: Louis-Joachim Guadibert became a patron of Monet's work, which enabled the artist to continue his work and care for his family. Monet and Camille married in June 1870,

and following the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, the couple fled with their son to London, England. There, Monet met Paul Durand-Ruel, who became his first art dealer.

Returning to France after the war, in 1872, Monet eventually settled in Argenteuil, an industrial town west of Paris, and began to develop his own technique. During his time in Argenteuil, Monet visited with many of his artist friends, including Renoir, Pissarro and Edouard Manet—who, according to Monet in a later interview, at first hated him because people confused their names. Banding together with several other artists, Monet helped form the Société Anonyme des Artistes, Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs, as an alternative to the Salon and exhibited their works together.

Monet sometimes got frustrated with his work. According to some reports, he destroyed a number of paintings—estimates range as high as 500 works. Monet would simply burn, cut or kick the offending piece. In addition to these outbursts, he was known to suffer from bouts of depression and self-doubt.

The Master of Light and Color: "Impression, Sunrise"

The society's April 1874 exhibition proved to be revolutionary. One of Monet's most noted works in the show, "Impression, Sunrise" (1873), depicted Le Havre's harbor in a morning fog. Critics used the title to name the distinct group of artists "Impressionists," saying that their work seemed more like sketches than finished paintings.

While it was meant to be derogatory, the term seemed fitting. Monet sought to capture the essence of the natural world using strong colors and bold, short brushstrokes; he and his contemporaries were turning away from the blended colors and evenness of classical art. Monet also brought elements of industry into his landscapes, moving the form forward and making it more contemporary. Monet began to exhibit with the Impressionists after their first show in 1874, and continued into the 1880s.

Monet's personal life was marked by hardship around this time. His wife became ill during her second pregnancy (their second son, Michel, was born in 1878), and she continued to deteriorate. Monet painted a portrait of her on her death bed. Before her passing, the Monets went to live with Ernest and Alice Hoschede and their six children.

After Camille's death, Monet painted a grim set of paintings known as the Ice Drift series. He grew closer to Alice, and the two eventually became romantically involved. Ernest spent much of his time in Paris, and he and Alice never divorced. Monet and Alice moved with their respective children in 1883 to Giverny, a place that would serve as a source of great inspiration for the artist and prove to be his final home. After Ernest's death, Monet and Alice married in 1892.

Monet gained financial and critical success during the late 1880s and 1890s, and started the serial paintings for which he would become well-known. In Giverny, he loved to paint outdoors in the gardens that he helped create

there. The water lilies found in the pond had a particular appeal for him, and he painted several series of them throughout the rest of his life; the Japanese-style bridge over the pond became the subject of several works, as well. (In 1918, Monet would donate 12 of his waterlily paintings to the nation of France to celebrate the Armistice.)

Sometimes Monet traveled to find other sources of inspiration. In the early 1890s, he rented a room across from the Rouen Cathedral, in northwestern France, and painted a series of works focused on the structure. Different paintings showed the building in morning light, midday, gray weather and more; this repetition was a result of Monet's deep fascination with the effects of light.

Besides the cathedral, Monet painted several things repeatedly, trying to convey the sensation of a certain time of day on a landscape or a place. He also focused the changes that light made on the forms of haystacks and poplar trees in two different painting series around this time. In 1900, Monet traveled to London, where the Thames River captured his artistic attention.

In 1911, Monet became depressed after the death of his beloved Alice. In 1912, he developed cataracts in his right eye. In the art world, Monet was out of step with the avant-garde. The Impressionists were in some ways being supplanted by the Cubist movement, led by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque.

But there was still a great deal of interest in Monet's work. During this period, Monet began a final series of 12 waterlily paintings commissioned by the Orangerie des Tuileries, a museum in Paris. He chose to make them on a very large scale, designed to fill the walls of a special space for the canvases in the museum; he wanted the works to serve as a "haven of peaceful meditation," believing that the images would soothe the "overworked nerves" of visitors.

His Orangerie des Tuileries project consumed much of Monet's later years. In writing to a friend, Monet stated, "These landscapes of water and reflection have become an obsession for me. It is beyond my strength as an old man, and yet I want to render what I feel." Monet's health proved to be an obstacle, as well. Nearly blind, with both of his eyes now seriously affected by cataracts, Monet finally consented to undergo surgery for the ailment in 1923.

Later Years and Death

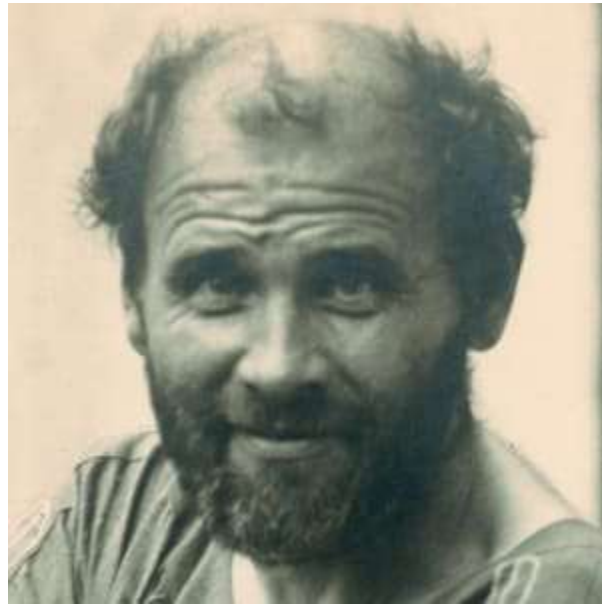
As he experienced in other points in his life, Monet struggled with depression in his later years. He wrote to one friend that "Age and chagrin have worn me out. My life has been nothing but a failure, and all that's left for me to do is to destroy my paintings before I disappear." Despite his feelings of despair, he continued working on his paintings until his final days.

Monet died on December 5, 1926, at his home in Giverny. Monet once wrote, "My only merit lies in having painted directly in front of nature, seeking to render my impressions of the most fleeting effects." Most art historians

believe that Monet accomplished much more than this: He helped change the world of painting by shaking off the conventions of the past. By dissolving forms in his works, Monet opened the door for further abstraction in art, and he is credited with influencing such later artists as Jackson Pollack, Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning.

Since 1980, Monet's Giverny home has housed the Claude Monet Foundation.

(Biography.com Editors ./(April 2, 2014)./Claude Monet Biography ./The Biography.com website ,/November 28, 2021 /A&E Television Networks ./////////<https://www.biography.com/artist/claude-monet>)



Nineteenth century Austrian painter Gustav Klimt is known for the highly decorative style of his works, his most famous being *The Kiss*.

Synopsis

Born in 1862, Austrian painter Gustav Klimt became known for the highly decorative style and erotic nature of his works, which were seen as a rebellion against the traditional academic art of his time. His most famous paintings are *The Kiss* and *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*.

Poverty and Promise

Gustav Klimt was born on the outskirts of Vienna, Austria, on July 14, 1862. His father, Ernst, was a struggling gold engraver who had immigrated to Vienna from Bohemia, and his mother, Anna, was musically talented, although she had never realized her dream of becoming a professional musician. Perhaps genetically predisposed to the arts, then, Klimt displayed a notable talent from an early age, and at 14 years old left his normal school to attend the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts on a full scholarship, no small matter considering both his youth and the relative poverty in which he had been raised.

While at the institution, Klimt received a conservative, classical training that he readily accepted, and he focused his studies on architectural painting. His early ambition as an artist was to simply become a drawing teacher. Klimt's horizons began to broaden, however, when his budding talent earned him various small commissions while he was still in school, and after his graduation in 1883, he opened a studio with his younger brother Ernst and their mutual friend Franz Masch.

Calling themselves the Company of Artists, the trio agreed to focus their work on murals and also to set aside any personal artistic inclinations in favor of the historical style popular among Vienna's upper class and aristocracy at that time. That decision proved to be a good one, as it not only won them numerous commissions to paint churches, theaters and other public spaces, but also allowed them to work interchangeably on their projects. Their most notable works during this time were the mural at the Vienna Burgtheater and the ceiling above the staircase at the Kunsthistorisches Museum. The group was honored for their achievements in 1888 when they received the Golden Order of Merit from Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Josef I.

In 1890, the Klimt brothers and Masch joined the Vienna Artists' Association, a conservative art group that controlled the majority of the exhibitions in the city. But although Gustav Klimt continued to align himself with the more traditional factions of the art world, he was soon to experience changes in his personal life that would send him off on a path all his own.

Secession

In 1891, Gustav's brother Ernst married a woman named Helene Flöge, and that same year, Gustav painted a portrait of her sister, Emilie for the first time. This first meeting marked the beginning of what would be a lifelong friendship and one that would have a meaningful impact on the direction of Klimt's later work. But it was the personal tragedy of the following year that would have the most significant influence on the course of Klimt's art, when both his father and brother Ernst died. Profoundly affected by their passing, Klimt began to reject the naturalistic trappings of his training in favor of a more personal style, one that relied heavily on symbolism and drew from a wide range of influences. With the passing of Ernst Klimt and the direction in which Gustav's style was heading, the Company of Artists was growing steadily more difficult to maintain. They were still receiving commissions, however, and in 1894 were chosen to paint murals for the ceiling of the Great Hall auditorium at the University of Vienna.

But continuing his quest for a more meaningful, personal artistic freedom, in 1897 Klimt and a group of like-minded artist resigned their membership in the Vienna Artists' Association and founded a new organization known as the Vienna Secession. Although primarily rejecting classical, academic art, the group did not focus on any one particular style, instead focusing its efforts on supporting young nontraditional artists, bringing international art to Vienna and exhibiting the works of its members. Klimt was nominated their first president, and he also served as a member of the editorial staff for its periodical, *Sacred Spring*. The first Vienna Secession exhibition was held the following year and was both well attended and popular. Among its featured works was Klimt's painting of the group's symbol, the Greek goddess Pallas Athena. In time it would come to be seen as the first in a series of works from Klimt's best known and most successful period.

Scandal, Success and the Golden Phase

In 1900, Philosophy, one of the three murals Klimt was developing for the University of Vienna, was exhibited for the first time, at the seventh Vienna Secession exhibition. Featuring various nude human forms and rather unsettling and dark symbolic imagery, the work caused a scandal among the university faculty. When the other two pieces, Medicine and Jurisprudence, were exhibited in subsequent exhibitions, they were met with an equally indignant response that ultimately resulted in a petition urging that they not be installed at the school, due to their ambiguous and pornographic nature. When several years later they were still not exhibited anywhere, an incensed Klimt withdrew from the commission and returned the fee in exchange for his paintings.

Yet despite these frustrations, Klimt's success was reaching its peak during this time. Despite its rejection in Vienna, his Medicine was exhibited at the Exposition Universelle in Paris and received the Grand Prix, and in 1902 his Beethoven Frieze was exhibited to great public acclaim. But perhaps most significant, in the early 1900s, Klimt was in the midst of what is commonly referred to as his "Golden Phase." Beginning with his Pallas Athena in 1898, Klimt created a series of paintings that made extensive use of ornamental gold leaf and a flat, two-dimensional perspective reminiscent of Byzantine mosaics to create striking iconic figures. Among the most representative of these works are "Judith" (1901), "Danae" (1907) and "The Kiss" (1908).



Klimt's 1907 "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I." (© 2015 Neue Galerie New York) READ ARTICLE: [Who Was Maria Altmann? The Real Story Behind 'Woman in Gold'](#) (Photo: © 2015 Neue Galerie New York)

Perhaps Klimt's most famous work from this period, however, is the 1907 "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I." Commissioned in 1903 by Bloch-Bauer's wealthy industrialist husband, the work remained in the family's possession until it was seized by the Nazis during World War II. Ultimately displayed in the Austrian State Gallery, the painting remained there until one of Bloch-Bauer's nieces, Maria Altmann, filed suit against Austria for its return. Altmann won her case in 2006, and the painting was sold at auction in June of that year for \$135 million. The work's storied past has been the subject of numerous books and documentaries, and most recently is the focus of the film *Woman in Gold*, which stars [Helen Mirren](#) as Maria Altmann.

Death and Life

Perhaps nothing can sum up Klimt's later years and work better than his own words: "I have never painted a self-portrait. I am less interested in myself as a subject for painting than I am in other people, above all women." Indeed, the majority of his later work features sketches and painting of women, typically in various states of undress or full nudity. A lifelong bachelor, Klimt had countless affairs during his lifetime, frequently with his models, and fathered some 14 children along the way. His most enduring relationship, however, was with Emilie Flöge. Although the full nature of their friendship is unknown, they remained in each other's company for the remainder of his life, and the paintings of landscapes that make up the bulk of his later non-portrait works were painted during summers spent with her and her family at Attersee, a lake in the Salzkammergut region of Austria.

In 1905 the Vienna Secession split into two groups, one of which formed around Klimt. That same year, he received a commission for the dining room ceiling of the Palais Stoclet, the Brussels home of a wealthy Belgian industrialist. The work was completed in 1910, and the following year his painting "Death and Life" received first prize at an international exhibition in Rome. Klimt considered the award among his greatest achievements.

In January 1918, Gustav Klimt suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed. He was subsequently hospitalized, and while there contracted pneumonia, of which he died on February 6, 1918. He is buried at the Hietzing cemetery in Vienna.

(David Blatty ./(April 2, 2014)./Gustav Klimt Biography ./The Biography.com website ./November 28, 2021 /A&E Television Networks . ///////////////https://www.biography.com/artist/gustav-klimt)